Flashback
Journal of the Washington County Historical Society
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Fayetteville: Mecca for Writers

The "gallant rogue" Charles J. Finger became the center for the 1920s-'30s thriving writing community

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Flashback

Journal of the Washington County Historical Society

Preserving our past for future generations

Volume 73 Fall 2023 Number 3

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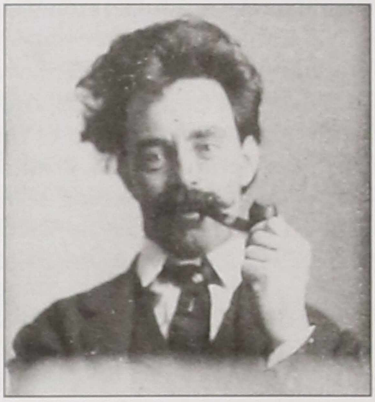

On the cover:
Two strips of photographs of Charles J. Finger, taken from a series of images found in his papers archived in Special Collections in the University of Arkansas Mullins Library. The photos may have been taken in the 1920s, after Finger moved his family to Fayetteville where he established a home west of the city that he called Gayeta. The Library of Congress titled its 2019 blog about Finger "Gallant Rogue or Hidden Folklorist?" [https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2019/07/charles-j-finger-gallant-rogue-or-hidden-folklorist/]

"Fayetteville: Mecca for Writers"[1]

By J.B. Hogan

The Ozark Mountains town of Fayetteville, Arkansas, may not seem like a prime candidate for a literary center, but over its nearly 200-year existence it has in fact produced a considerable number of writers. In recent times, such authors as novelists John Williams, Ellen Gilchrist, Donald Harington, and poet Miller Williams, all professors at the University of Arkansas, have called Fayetteville home.

In years past, the town produced many other talented authors, some connected to the university, others not. Among these were William Rheem Lighton, Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni, Murray Sheehan, Charles Morrow Wilson, George Ballard, and Charles J. Finger. The starting point for the town's literary reputation, however, is perhaps the most personally and artistically extravagant of them all, A. W. Arrington.

Alfred W. Arrington was born in 1810 in North Carolina. It is believed he was a child prodigy and a highly popular young Methodist evangelist, later evolving into a lawyer, legislator, would-be soldier, and flamboyant storyteller. Arrington had a reputation for being a gifted orator and at about six feet, 180 pounds, was a commanding physical presence as well.[2]

In 1832, he displayed the volatility of his nature, which would be his hallmark, by renouncing his ministerial calling and becoming a "militant infidel." Rejected then by his devout former followers, he went to

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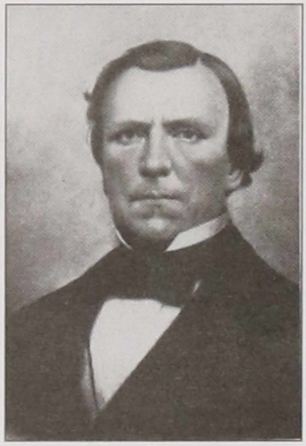
J.B. Hogan is a local historian and author who has published more than 300 stories and poems and 11 books. He is a frequent contributor to Flashback. *His article "Fayetteville and the Influenza Epidemic of 1918" (*Flashback, *Fall 2021) was awarded Best Community History in a County or Local Journal from the Arkansas Historical Association.*

New Orleans where in the fall of 1832 he again presented himself as a Methodist minister but was quickly asked to resign by observant church fathers.[3]

Arrington then moved on to the Arkansas Territory, first landing in Little Rock, and then in central Missouri before the Methodists there reinstated him briefly and then once again expelled him from the church.[4] This was in 1834 and Arrington landed upon his quick-moving feet once more, this time in Fayetteville.

Seemingly able to move from social pariah to mainstream respectability at the drop of a hat, Arrington married Sarah Conner, daughter of a prominent local family. He then studied law and by 1838 was a practicing attorney in Fayetteville, the seat for Washington County.[5]



Alfred W. Arrington. From the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol, 55, No. 3, January 1952.

The year 1839 was one of the most extraordinary in Fayetteville history and Arrington was right in the thick of the activities. In addition to the town's growth and its newfound status as the center of Northwest Arkansas, three major tragedies occurred during this remarkable time as well.

Early in the year a group of Cherokee passed through town on their Trail of Tears march to Indian Territory. An incident occurred on the Fayetteville Square, and a local man, Willis Wallace, killed one of the traveling Cherokee, Nelson Orr. Wallace would later be acquitted of this killing, a decision that outraged Arrington.[6]

Then on successive weeks in June, a family named Wright was murdered at their home in Cane Hill, and the ongoing internal feud among the Cherokee relating to the signing of the treaty that led to the Trail of Tears erupted in violence. Three leaders of the Treaty Party, Major Ridge, his son John Ridge, and kinsman Elias Boudinot, were all killed. Major Ridge was cut down just inside the Arkansas state line.[7]

Arrington's role in the aftermath of all these events would be the germ from which his later literary career would grow. Fiercely opposed to Wallace's acquittals (Willis Wallace later killed another man in Fayetteville and also got off on that charge) and the summarily convicted and executed men blamed for the Cane Hill Wright murders—and generally distressed by this and the subsequent Cherokee killings—Arrington very nearly had a shooting skirmish with Wallace and his supporters on the Square in Fayetteville.[8]

Following these events and after serving in the Arkansas legislature, Arrington left Arkansas, and his wife Sarah,[9] to become a lawyer and judge down in Texas.[10] In the mid-1840s, his books about his experienc-

James H. Van Hoose. From Find a Grave, James Hayden Van Hoose.

es began to appear under the pseudonym Charles Summerfield. Among his works were: *Desperadoes of the South-West* (1847) and *The Rangers and Regulators of the Tanaha* (1856).

The following description of the one-quarter Cherokee woman Rose Quinet during the Wright Family murder trial in 1839, shows Arrington's style of writing in which, as Ted R. Worley has noted, "facts…are imbedded in a mass of highly imaginative detail."[11]

> "Gentle reader…you must have noticed… one star in the moving constellation of serenest, or sweetest, or sunniest beauty, more beautiful than all the rest; a slight, child-like brunette, whose eyes beat all the diamonds in the world, whose hair falls in slender wavy curls, unbraided free, far down her shoulders, and around those veiled rosebud breasts, twin pillows for sleeping Eros…You could span her waist with the clasp of your two hands. Her dark brow is pensive as night, when coining out of all its stars celestial songs for the ear of the poet…Had I all the wealth of the world, an empire for my heritage, a throne instead of a writing desk, a sceptre in place of a pen, I would give it all to possess such a treasure, and reckon the exchange a great bargain! Such is the beauty of…Rose Quinet, the Cherokee quadroon, affianced to Ellerey Turner, the youth accused of murder."[12]

A. W. Arrington was a complex man: passionate, wild, and brilliant, and author of remarkably dime store-like purple prose. Following a post-Christmas stroke, he passed away on December 31, 1867, at the age of 57. The dual nature of his personality and work is shown by descriptions of him penned after his death.

In 1928, William S. Campbell, Fayetteville historian wrote: "His brilliance seems to have been handicapped by an erratic disposition."[13] William Hughes, in his biography of Archibald Yell, said that Arrington "was a lawyer, legislator, and hyperbolic author who composed a number of exaggerated tales about northwest Arkansas' desperadoes."[14]

In the years after Arrington and until the turn of the 20th century, the writers in Fayetteville tended to be either journalists or local historians. Some of the better-known newspapermen were William Quesenbury (also known as Bill Cush) and brothers E. B. and W. B. Moore, who owned and operated the leading newspaper in Fayetteville after the Civil War, the weekly *Fayetteville Democrat*.

Included among the local historians were James H. Van Hoose, who penned recollections of the town's growth and its young history for the newspapers, and Augustus "Uncle Gus" Lewis whose personal tales of local taverns and Civil War experiences also made it into print.

Early in the new century, a remarkable family emigrated to Fayetteville from the Midwest. William Rheem Lighton and his family, wife Laura, daughters Dorothy, Betty, and Suzanne, and son Louis Duryea or "Bud," were part of the Back to the Land movement of the time, and they settled on land east of town that they called Happy Hollow.

William Lighton was born in Pennsylvania in 1866. As a young man he traveled west, eventually landing in Atchison, Kansas, where in 1900 he married Laura McMaken. The young couple moved to Nebraska near Laura's family. During this time, Lighton established himself as a writer and covered the 1906 San Francisco earthquake for the *Boston Evening Transcript*.[15]

This photo, from the Frontispiece of the 1915 edition of the book *Happy Hollow Farm*, is likely that of William R. Lighton and his daughter.

In 1908, the Lightons moved from Omaha, Nebraska, to Fayetteville, Arkansas, where they bought and developed property on the east side of town that they called the Happy Hollow Farm. The Lightons quickly blended into the local culture. The experience at Happy Hollow prompted Will Lighton to write "The Story of an Arkansas Farm," an article published in the nationally popular magazine *Saturday Evening Post*.[16]

The story of the Lighton family's adventure not only made them local celebrities with countless "back-to-the-landers" coming to visit Happy Hollow,[17] but it also put tiny Fayetteville and its author Will Lighton on the country's radar. As big as the *Post* article was (it would be expanded and published as a book, *Happy Hollow Farm*, in 1915), it was not Lighton's first nor last writing success.

Back in 1904, Henry Holt and Company of New York had published *Uncle Mac's Nebrasky*, stories of early settlers in Nebraska told to Lighton by Laura's uncle, Henry "Uncle Mac" McMaken. In subsequent years, Lighton published stories about another of his wife's relatives, her cousin Dan Chalfant, a cowboy from Lusk, Wyoming. Chalfant became the model for Lighton's title character of the book *Billy Fortune*, published in 1916.[18]

The success of *Billy Fortune* led the Lightons to Hollywood and a momentous encounter with famed humorist Will Rogers, the star of the 1920 silent film version of the book entitled *Water, Water, Everywhere*. It was the fourth movie for Rogers who played the Billy Fortune lead character.[19]

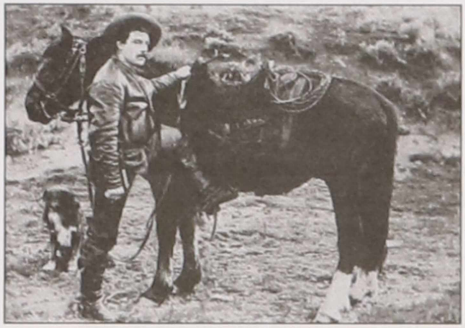
On March 5, 1920, a "major social event" took place on the Fayetteville Square. Forty-five "favored town and University people" gathered at the little Victory Theatre for the "first showing" of *Water, Water, Everywhere*,

"written by Lighton and his son, with Will Rogers as the star."[20] Naturally enough, the Lightons and Rogers became fast friends, and when Rogers came to town he would spend what spare time he had with his "old friends the Lightons."[21]

In 1921, Laura Lighton and her daughters had returned to Fayetteville in preparation for a possible permanent move to California while Will and son Louis Duryea, "Bud," stayed on to pursue writing in Hollywood. Unfortunately, before he could have more success and before he was to rejoin the family in Fayetteville, Will Lighton died in California on January 25, 1923.[22] He and most of the family are buried in Fayetteville's historic Evergreen Cemetery.

Son Bud remained in Hollywood and became a highly successful writer and producer. One of the most famous films that Bud produced, credited as Louis D. Lighton, was *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* released in February 1945.[23]

Given the significance of early writers like Arrington, Quesenbury, and Will Lighton, it still was not until English adventurer and man of letters, Charles J. Finger settled on the western edge of town in 1920 that Fayetteville began earning its title as a creative center. Born in 1867, in Willesden, England, Finger took to the road as a young man, looking for adventure in distant lands. For several years he was in South America, working as a gaucho in Argentina and being part of a scientific expedition to Tierra del Fuego.[24]



Charles J. Finger, as a gaucho preparing to mount a pony. Undated photo courtesy the University of Arkansas Special Collections Picture Collection, 3935.

After sojourns in Ohio and Texas, Finger arrived in Fayetteville in 1920. In a short time, he became the center and initiator of a thriving literary scene, one that was particularly remarkable, especially for such a small town in the northwest corner of Arkansas. The nearby presence of the University of Arkansas contributed, of course, to this creative atmosphere, but it was Finger's imperial presence at his country home dubbed "Gayeta Lodge" and his literary success and influence that led the *Arkansas Democrat* by 1921 to proclaim: "Fayetteville: Mecca for Writers."[25]

Finger remained in town until his death in 1941 and in that time produced a remarkable body of literary work. He had been given his start as a writer by William M. Reedy who published early work by Finger in his celebrated journal *The Mirror*, a nationally-known literary magazine based in St. Louis, Missouri. When Reedy passed in 1920, Finger was inspired to begin his own journal *All's Well*, or *The Mirror Repolished*, in part as a follow up or replacement for his mentor's magazine. *All's Well*, featuring such national figures as H. L. Mencken and local authors on the rise like Charles

Morrow Wilson, but written primarily by Finger himself, ran until 1935.[26]

Gayeta, with Finger as host and raconteur, received a number of prominent literary figures of the 1920s and 1930s, including Edgar Lee Masters, John Cowper Powys, and Carl Sandburg.[27] Finger also served as mentor for several local authors including University of Arkansas journalism teacher and budding novelist, Murray Sheehan, and the aforementioned Charles Morrow Wilson, who worked on *All's Well* and who compiled and edited Finger's *Ozark Fantasia*, published in 1928.[28]

Many other writers visited or stayed at Gayeta during this time, among them poet John Gould Fletcher, independent history scholar John Tate Appleby, and former students from journalism classes taught by Sheehan's replacement at the UofA, Walter Lemke, including Marguerite Gilstrap. Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni, who would later become Arkansas Poet Laureate, also visited Gayeta at least twice during the 1930s when her literary output and reputation were on an ascendant trajectory.[29]

Beyond his role as host and mentor, Charles J. Finger was, of course, a successful writer. During his years in Fayetteville, he published many books, including some 35 to 40 in the popular "Little Blue Book" series edited and published by E. Haldeman-Julius of Girard, Kansas.[30] Finger's considerable contribution to the series included such diverse titles as *Sailor Chanties and Cowboy Songs, Great Pirates, The Travels of Marco Polo, Hints on Writing Short Stories,* and *The Gist of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*.[31]

Even though Finger produced a large number of Little Blue Books, mostly in 1923 and 1924, he did not limit himself to the shorter form. In fact, he published many full-length books as well. One of these, *Tales from Silver Lands*, was published in 1925 only five years after his arrival in Fayetteville. This book of folk tales from Central and South America[32] was quite successful and garnered Finger the Newbery Prize. Officially known as the John Newbery Medal, this prize is awarded annually to the "author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children."[33]

In 1929, Finger's book *Courageous Companions* won the Longman's Juvenile Fiction Award, netting the author $2,000 in prize money.[34] Other of his full-length titles include the previously mentioned *Ozark Fantasia* (1928) and his memoir *Seven Horizons* (1930).

For some writers, a memoir might indicate a wrapping up of their creativity but not for Finger. During the last decade of his life, he published some 15 books. Among these were *The Distant Prize: A Book About Rovers, Rangers and Rascals* (1935), *When Guns Thundered at Tripoli* (1937), *Give a Man a Horse* (1938), and *Bobbie and Jock and the Mailman* (1938), a full-length children's book illustrated by his talented daughter Helen.

Busy as he was with his own writing, from 1936-1938, Finger also accepted an editorial position with the Federal Writers Project. The result of this work was *Arkansas: A Guide to the State*, a compendium of information about the people and culture of the state that also provided a number

of tour suggestions for exploring different areas of interest.[35]

Working to the end, on January 7, 1941, Charles J. Finger, the Squire of Gayeta, passed away. He was at first buried on the grounds of Gayeta, but when his wife, Eleanor (Nellie) passed in 1965, Finger was disinterred and buried beside her in the Farmington (Arkansas) Cemetery, a few miles to the west.[36] The adventurer, literary host, and award-winning author was gone, but his legacy, both as a writer and as a mentor, was not.

Another writer of this era and a protégé of Charles J. Finger was Murray Sheehan. Sheehan was a UofA journalism teacher, head of the school's publicity and news bureau, and a budding novelist. Born James Murray Sheehan in 1887 in Hamilton, Ohio, by the time he came to Fayetteville he had attained a bachelor's degree from Miami (Ohio) University and a Master of Arts degree from Harvard. He had served in World War I as well, reaching the rank of sergeant major in an artillery unit.[37]

By 1921, Sheehan had migrated to Fayetteville where he began his job at the UofA. University law professor Robert Leflar remarked that Sheehan, who was known for being somewhat eccentric, could be seen riding to school each day on "an elderly mare." Leflar, who married Charles J. Finger's daughter Helen, who was a talented artist in her own right, described Sheehan as someone who believed that "a rural bohemianism with literary overtones was the ideal life." Sheehan and Finger built a stone house on Finger's property at Gayeta where the younger writer lived for a spell in the later 1920s.[38]

Sheehan is particularly known for two books *Half-Gods* and *Eden. Eden*, published in 1928, is a retelling of the Adam and Eve story and although well received at the time as "imaginative" and "sincere,"[39] it was his novel *Half-Gods*, from 1927, that stirred up the most interest, at least locally. Set in the fictitious Missouri town of Roosevelt, *Half-Gods* is nonetheless a "thinly disguised" satire thoroughly assailing the provincialism of both the UofA and of Fayetteville itself. Among Sheehan's targets were entrepreneur, banker, and newspaper owner Jay Fulbright and UofA President John C. Futrall.[40]

From all accounts Sheehan and Futrall had a complicated relationship almost from the beginning, and Sheehan apparently threatened to resign several times. It was not long after the publication of *Half-Gods* and *Eden*, that Sheehan, feeling overworked and underappreciated, offered to resign once more. This time, perhaps to Sheehan's surprise, Futrall accepted the resignation.[41]

This was Sheehan's final break from Fayetteville, but he had also quarreled with his mentor, Charles J. Finger, about *Half-Gods*. Despite the book getting a positive review in the *New York Times*, which called it an "excellent, ironic, humorous…portrayal" of an "element of American life,"[42] Finger had told Sheehan he thought the book was "mediocre."[43] It was enough to put a serious wedge in their relationship.

In addition to the novels that were published during his Fayetteville

Left: Undated photo of a group at Gayeta Lodge including Charles Finger, his wife and children, and Murray Sheehan (seated on the floor in front of the desk, facing left) and Willam Baerg. Courtesy University of Arkansas Special Collections Picture Collection 3936.
Right: Charles Morrow Wilson in 1947. Photo courtesy University of Arkansas Special Collections Picture Collection 0912.

years, Sheehan also had some numbers in the Haldeman-Julius series of Little Blue Books including *The Story of Architecture* and *Hints on News Reporting*, both coming out back in 1923.[44]

By 1933, after his Fayetteville days, Sheehan was employed as a liaison for the Legation of Siam (Thailand) and was tutor for the Prince of Siam. He served some 30 years in this capacity, supervising over 20 people as part of his duties. Murray Sheehan died June 23, 1963, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.[45] A fitting epitaph for him comes from Robert Leflar who wrote that when Sheehan left Fayetteville, it "lost one of its most colorful personalities."[46]

Charles Morrow Wilson was yet another of Charles J. Finger's protégés. Although Wilson is all but forgotten today, he was once a highly regarded, well-known writer of national and international status. He published more than 45 books, mostly non-fiction, and wrote countless magazine articles and short stories during a professional writing career that spanned some 50 years.

Wilson was born June 16, 1905, the youngest child of Joseph Dickson and Mattie Morrow Wilson. His grandfather was A. M. Wilson, one of Fayetteville's early settlers. Notably intelligent and from an old local family, Charles Morrow Wilson graduated from Fayetteville High School in 1922 and went on to the UofA where he soon began to make his way as a writer.

As a sophomore, he was listed in the *Razorback* yearbook as a "young journalist of note" and contributed (as "Chas. Wilson") to the school humor magazine *The White Mule*."[47] In his junior year, 1924-1925, he became the military editor of the *Razorback* and rewrite editor for *The Arkansas Traveler* student newspaper.[48]

In that same school year, he began to frequent Charles J. Finger's Gayeta Lodge, and the established author became his mentor. Following graduation from Arkansas in 1926, Wilson worked on Finger's *All's Well* and contributed book reviews to the journal.[49] In March 1927, he became associate editor, and that summer he wrote the essay "On Cats," very likely the first publication of his career.[50]

In June 1927, he became business manager and, with Finger, co-owner of *All's Well*. That same month, his article "In the Arkansas Backhills, was published."[51] Later in the year, Wilson compiled and edited a collection of Finger's regional stories into a book called *Ozark Fantasia*.[52]

In March 1928, *All's Well* printed Wilson's story "The Reeds Go Forth,"[53] which was almost certainly his first published fiction. Finger's earlier assessment of Wilson's ability seemed to be confirmed. "I'm willing to wager the best five books out of my library…," Finger had written after the publication of *Ozark Fantasia*, "that Wilson is a writer in the making."[54]

While still connected with *All's Well*, Wilson also became a "stringer" (on-assignment reporter) for newspapers in both New York City and St. Louis.[55] In 1927, he covered the Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney heavyweight championship held in Chicago on September 22.[56]

Even during the Great Depression, when everything seemed to be on a downturn, Charles Morrow Wilson rose quickly as a writer. In the 1930s, he put out a large number of articles and short stories, and nine books.

In 1930, his first novel, *Acres of Sky*, was published by Putnam. Two nonfiction works came out in 1934: *Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark*, and *Backwoods America*. *Money at the Crossroads* was published in 1937 and *Country Living: Plus and Minus* in 1938; both were also nonfiction.

He also was published regularly in many national magazines like the *American Spectator, Atlantic Monthly,* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. He was paid well for his work, receiving as much as $400 an article in the east coast journals[57]—very good money indeed, especially at the time.

Ambassadors in White (1942) presented biographies of famous doctors specializing in tropical medicine while *Empires in Green and Gold* (1946) told the history of the banana industry. The latter book, in particular, showed Wilson's considerable skill in blending information from several sources into a readable whole.

He also published several juvenile books, starting with *Ginger Blue* in 1940. *The Great Turkey Drive* (1964), *Dow Baker and the Great Banana Fleet* (1972), and *Butterscotch and the Happy Barnyard* (1953), which he wrote for his own children, are other titles in this genre.

In June 1947, Wilson was honored by the UofA with a Distinguished Alumni Citation, which led to a brief return home to Fayetteville. In 1950, his novel *Acres of Sky* was made into a play as part of the grand opening of the university Fine Arts Center, a building designed by Wilson's Fayetteville contemporary, internationally renowned architect Edward Durrell Stone.[58]

Even though the play, which debuted on November 16, 1950, was

Left: Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni and son Paul Jr. Photo courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / John Marinoni Collection (S-2001-111-7).
Right: Several writers are among this photo of UofA journalism students taken in 1929 by Walter Lemke. Front, left to right: Mary Schilling, Nelda Hickman, Mrs. Zillah C. Peel, Marguerite Gilstrap, Mabel Claire Gold, Madge Curtis. Back, left to right, Mary Ellen Fulks, Virginia Reed, Maude Gold, Mary Peel, Lura Hudson. Courtesy General photo file, Arkansas State Archives, Little Rock, Arkansas.

well received, Wilson's return home failed to stick and by 1954 he returned to his farm home in Putney, Vermont.[59]

Back in New England, Wilson continued his work, publishing more than 20 more books. Representative titles, again all nonfiction, included the *Fight Against Hunger* (1969), *The Monroe Doctrine* (1971), and *The Dred Scott Decision* (1973). On Tuesday, March 1, 1977, after a lifetime as a man of letters, Charles Morrow Wilson died in Putney, Vermont at age 71.

Back in 1928, the UofA hired Walter J. Lemke to create a full-scale journalism department. Aided by his colleague Joseph Thalheimer, over the next decades Lemke taught many students who would become newspaper writers including Ernie Deane and Johnny Porter.

The department also produced a dynamic slate of women journalists including Marguerite Gilstrap, sisters Maude and Mabel Gold, and Zillah Cross Peel. Peel was an editor and local historian and gained additional recognition with publications in national journals like *Country Gentleman*, *Woman's Home Companion*, and *Ladies' Home Journal*. She was known for her work on the WPA *Guide to Arkansas* and the Federal Writers' Project *Slave Narratives* as well.[60]

In Fayetteville itself during this time, the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* (later the *Northwest Arkansas Times*) featured two significant women as well. Roberta Fulbright owned and operated the newspaper, and Lessie Stringfellow Read was her long-time editor and close friend. Read edited the newspaper from 1918 until she retired in 1939.[61]

The best-known woman in this era of successful local writers, however, was the poet Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni. Born January 5, 1888, in Italy,

she migrated to New York in the late 1890s with her parents. She met language professor Antonio Marinoni there, and they were married in 1908. Professor Marinoni and his bride relocated to Fayetteville, where he was employed as a professor of romance languages at the UofA.[62] The new location seemed to stimulate the artistic urge in Rosa, and by the mid-1920s, she had begun writing, in short order turning out fiction and poetry in an absolute explosion of creativity.

The *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* of January 26, 1927, stated that in the previous seven-month period Marinoni had no less than 560 publications, of which 450 were poems.[63] In 1933 it was reported that "in the past three years she is said to have composed more than 3,000 poems." A 1938 summary reported that since she began writing in 1926, Marinoni had "published in 159 markets, over 4,000 poems, about 1,000 short stories, four serials, one novel, stories and verse for children, two books of verse, and two books of epigrams, besides floods of review and personal sketches."[64]

Marinoni published a number of books of verse during her lifetime including *Behind the Mask* (1928), *Red Kites and Wooden Crosses* (1929), *North of Laughter* (1931), and *Side Show* (1938). The poem "Apple Woman," from *Side Show*, may serve as representative of her style during this time:

> Proud as a mother cat with her new litter
> Of healthy kittens frisking in the sun,
> The Apple Woman sits beside her cart
> And polishes the apples one by one.
> She blows her breath upon each rosy swell.
> And rubs it with her apron to a glow.
> Around her black umbrella flutters down
> A silver halo of November snow.[65]

During these years, Marinoni was also one of the many visitors at Charles J. Finger's Gayeta Lodge. Records indicate she was there in 1932, and on a November evening in 1937, she was the "star" of the evening's readings and entertainment.[66]

During World War II she was active in the Red Cross, and near the end of the war she lost her husband of 36 years when Professor Antonio Marinoni died in 1944. Two years later, she married Professor Luigi Passarelli, one of Antonio's colleagues in the romance language department at the UofA.[67]

On October 15, 1948, Arkansas Governor Ben Laney declared a first annual Poetry Day as a result of Marinoni's promotion of poetry "throughout the state." Five years later, in 1953, Marinoni was chosen Arkansas Poet Laureate, the same year her second husband Professor Passarelli died.[68] Throughout these years of loss and accolades, she maintained her strong work habits.

The year 1953 also saw the publication of her book *Timberline* as well. The poem "Blizzard" in this collection displays her use of visual and tactile imagery at this stage of her career.

In the field,
Hide crunching as they move,
The cattle stand in the blizzard,
Blue vapor bubbling from their moist nostrils.
. . . . .

In the orchard
The apple trees droop like willows.
At intervals
Their ice-coated branches crack,
Shattering to the ground
With the sound of broken glass.

In the forest,
Beyond the farm house,
A dead wolf sprawls beside a trap,
His mangled leg resting on red snow.[69]

In 1956 she published *The Ozarks and Some of Its People*, the first of a four-part Ozark Sunlight Series. *The Ozarks and Some (More) of its People* followed in 1961, and 1966 saw the publication of *Lend Me Your Ears! A Beakfull of Humorous Verse*, the third book in the series. *Whoo-Whoo the "Howl" of the Ozarks Says: Think and Wink!* (1967) completed the quartet of books.

In 1969, Governor Winthrop Rockefeller honored Marinoni by proclaiming October 15 Rosa Marinoni Day, a fitting tribute to the extraordinary literary achievements of the state's long-serving Poet Laureate. On March 26, 1970, Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni died. She is buried in the St. Joseph Cemetery in Fayetteville.[70]

Another writer, one who fell outside the local literary groups due to his race in this overtly segregated time and place, was George Ballard. A Black author who has mostly been lost in time or nearly so and who most assuredly should not be, Ballard was at his peak during the 1920s and 1930s. Though not as well-known as most of the other local authors during this active literary period, he is, nonetheless, a writer of import and worthy of continued evaluation and interest.

George Pool Ballard was born January 4, 1882, in the rural community of Cincinnati in western Washington County. When he was about 20 he moved into Fayetteville and married Rosetta Dart.[71] In these segregated times, Ballard did what he was able to provide for his family. He shined shoes, worked as a mechanic, and was janitor at the Washington County jail.[72]

Ballard's literary abilities were first recognized when he wrote a tribute poem upon the death of President Woodrow Wilson. Wilson died on February 3, 1924, and on February 6, 1924, Ballard's poem was published in the Fayetteville paper. Within 10 days, he had garnered "wide rec-

ognition" not only at home but around the nation as well.[73]

Titled "Woodrow Wilson—A Tribute," the poem was lauded by readers in Iowa, Arizona, and Florida. Reverend Frank W. Court, a Methodist Episcopal minister from Davenport, Iowa, commended Ballard for his "excellent production" and wished him "every success."[74]

Ballard's poem begins:

> Each human heart is touched with grief,
> The nation bows its head
> For over the wire the news is flashed
> Woodrow Wilson is dead.

The final verse reads:

> He has no need of "worldly peace"
> He leaves the league behind
> He has signed his name where angels sing
> "Blest be the tie that binds."[75]

Reflective of the age in which the author lived, the poem was signed: George Ballard (colored), Fayetteville.

Just three weeks after the Woodrow Wilson tribute, Ballard had another poem printed. It was called "A Toiler Speaks" and was written in response to "Contentment," a poem by author John J. Montague. Montague's poem was about a "white-collared" hero, a "soft-handed, dressed-up" man "content to live idle and clean-collared" while the work of the world was done by those "not afraid to soil their hands or garments."[76]

Ballard's response was quick and to the point, as shown in a portion of it here:

> I always feel proud of the work that I do,
> It's a kind that the public demands.
> I can not spoil my complexion like you
> For I am a dark-collar man
> . . . . .
>
> Although my face may be black as a crow,
> And my hands be covered with dirt
> It gives me great satisfaction to know
> That I'm not a mere collar and shirt.
>
> So give me the overalls, jumper and cap,
> Although they may tend to degrade.
> I have no use for the white-collared man
> Who does nothing but sit in the shade.[77]

This time the poem was simply signed: George Ballard.

Ballard's poetic work culminated in 1928 with his book of verse *Ozark Ballards*. The cleverly titled collection included 41 poems and was edited by Lessie Stringfellow Read, editor of the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*. The newspaper's parent company, Democrat Publishing and Printing, put out the book.[78]

Ozark Ballards was dedicated to "Members of the Colored Race Who Thus May Be Encouraged To Seek Self-Expression Even In A Crude Way" and to all the "White Friends Who Have Lent Help And Encouragement."[79] After *Ozark Ballards* was published, Ballard mostly dropped from the public eye. On April 15, 1929, it was reported he opened a "shine parlor" at 103 N. Block,[80] and the next year he and three other men were hurt, though not seriously, in a car wreck.[81]

George Ballard. Photo courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History (S-88-177-1).

In 1935-1936, a new school for Black children was built in Fayetteville. Dedication ceremonies for Lincoln School were held May 21, 1936. One of the highlights of the evening was the unveiling of the new school's George Ballard Library, honoring the community's fine local poet.[82]

George Ballard died at home on December 3, 1951. He is buried in an unmarked grave somewhere in Oaks Cemetery, Fayetteville's traditional and historic Black cemetery.[83]

Decades after Ballard's death, in July 1978, during Fayetteville's Sesquicentennial, his light-hearted poem "Parable," written for the 1928 Centennial, was reprinted. The poem is a tribute to Fayetteville:

> So if you live in Fayetteville
> Don't treat her with abuse,
> Don't kill her to get all the eggs
> Like the farmer did the goose.
>
> Just try to be contented,
> And help your town to thrive;
> Do everything within your power
> To keep the goose alive.[84]

As time passed, the coterie of writers and artists of this era would move away from town, go on to other places, live other lives. On January 7, 1941, Charles J. Finger, the Squire of Gayeta, died, taking with him the central gathering point for the local group of dynamic, creative writers. Murray Sheehan died in 1968 and Rosa Marinoni in 1970, ending her long run as Arkansas Poet Laureate. When Charles Morrow Wilson died in 1977, the last of the old literary crowd was gone.

But for that shining time in the past, at its peak from the early 1920s through the 1940s, Fayetteville was home to an extraordinary number of talented people. Because of these remarkable artists, the little Ozark Mountains town lived up to its billing as a "Mecca for Writers."

Endnotes

[1]Title taken from "Fayetteville—Mecca for Writers," by Mrs. K. G. Tallqvist, *Arkansas Democrat* (Little Rock), November 20, 1921.
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[3]Ibid.
[4]Ibid., p. 317. A milder entry for Arrington in *Virtual American Biographies* suggests he "abandoned his ministry" rather than being expelled. Accessed February 17, 2022, at http://www.famousamericans.net/alfredwarrington/.
[5]Ibid.
[6]David Malone, "The *Gazette* Reports on the Fuss at Fayetteville," *Flashback*, Vol. 48, No.2, May 1998, pp. 2-3.
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[16]Jonathan Neuse and Paul Jarvis, "The Contributions of William Lighton to Northwest Arkansas," *Flashback*, Vol. 36, No. 2, May 1986, p. 17.
[17]Deane C. Carter, "Recollections" of "William R. Lighton's Happy Hollow Farm," *Flashback*, Vol. 18, No. 3, August 1968, p. 5.
[18]Suzanne Chalfant Lighton, undated note attached to interior cover of *Billy Fortune* by Will Lighton, Fayetteville (Arkansas) Public Library, viewed February 11, 2022.
[19]Will Rogers, Internet Movie Database. Accessed February 17, 2022, at https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0737259/.
[20]Robert A. Leflar, *The First 100 Years: Centennial History of the University of Arkansas* (Fayetteville Arkansas: University of Arkansas Foundation, 1976), p. 135.
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[22]Suzanne C. Lighton, "How It Happened," *Flashback*, Vol. 18, No. 3, August 1968, p. 6.
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[24]Mary Ann Spain, "The Squire of Gayeta Remembered," *Flashback*, Vol. 31, No. 1, February, 1981, pp. 19.
[25]Tallqvist, "Fayetteville—Mecca for Writers."
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[27]"Dr. William T. Baerg, Entomologist Extraordinary," *Flashback*, Vol. 34, No. 2, May 1984, p. 9. This article is actually a memoir piece, written by Dr. Baerg, a University of Arkansas professor, for his family.
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[42]Howerton, "James Murray Sheehan."
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[48]Ibid., 1925, pp. 123 and 125.
[49]*All's Well*, Vol. 6, No. 8, December 1926, p. 17.
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[51]Ibid., Vol. 7, No. 1, June 1927, pp. 14-15.
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[55]Charles Morrow Wilson, detailed resume, April 27, 1961. The newspapers were the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *New York World*. University of Arkansas Libraries, Special Collections, C1318, Box 37, Folder 1.
[56]*Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, September 16, 1927. This bout is famous for the referee's "long count" given to Tunney who went on to defeat Dempsey again and bring to an end the ex-champion's former dominance as a heavyweight fighter.
[57]Ben Hibbs (editor, *Country Gentleman*) to Charles Morrow Wilson, June 14, 1937. University of Arkansas Libraries, Special Collections, C1274, Box 10, Folder 5.
[58]For a full account of Charles Morrow Wilson's unsuccessful return home to Fayetteville, see J. B. Hogan, "You Can't Go Home Again: Charles Morrow Wilson's Short-Lived Return to Fayetteville," *Flashback*, Vol. 60, No. 4, Winter 2010, pp. 115-145.
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[61]Dorothy D. Stuck and Nan Snow, *Roberta: A Most Remarkable Fulbright* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 1997), p. 122. Roberta Fulbright rose to local and statewide prominence through her ownership of the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* (later renamed the *Northwest Arkansas Times*), which fell to her after the unexpected 1923 death of her entrepreneur husband Jay Fulbright who had built a small economic empire in Fayetteville and the nearby area.
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[71]Joe Neal, "Remembering an Arkansas Poet," *Grapevine*, Vol. 8, No. 26, March 16, 1977, pp. 5-7. Information about Ballard's life is sketchy, but this article is one of the best sources for details of his life.
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[73]Ibid., February 6, 1924.
[74]Ibid., February 16, 1924.
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[76]Ibid., February 28, 1924.
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[78]The Democrat Publishing and Printing Company was also the publisher of the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*.
[79]*Ozark Ballards*, unpaginated front matter dedication page.
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[82]*The Fayetteville Daily Democrat* reported on March 4, 1936, that 78 books had been donated to the new Ballard Library. Ballard said he was trying to collect as many books for the library as he could find that were about successful Blacks.
[83]For more information about George Ballard and his poetry, see J. B. Hogan, "George Ballard: Forgotten Poet of the Hollow," *Flashback*, Vol. 63, No. 4, Winter 2013, pp. 147-159.
[84]*Ozark Ballards*, p. 53.

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United It Grew: The History of the United Way in NWA

A national charitable agency enhanced its local mission as Northwest Arkansas became a significant population center

By David Edmark

(The author gratefully acknowledges the research efforts of Ben Walworth, who as a University of Arkansas student intern at the United Way of Northwest Arkansas in 2021 researched decades worth of organizational files and newspaper articles that provide the foundation for this article.)

In the early days of the Great Depression in a region that was not known for having excess amounts of discretionary cash on hand, something that could be viewed as out of the ordinary began. The Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce established a local drive for charitable purposes affiliated with a national organization called the Community Chest.

The Fayetteville Community Chest's initial fund-raising effort in November 1931 netted $13,427, a bit short of the announced goal of $16,080.[1] But two years into a national economic calamity that began with the 1929 stock market crash, that was an achievement worth noting.

As a measure of the growth since then, the 2022 United Way of Northwest Arkansas drive—the successor organization to the Fayetteville Community Chest and the mergers of all the subsequent organizations that followed in Washington and Benton counties—raised $3.025 million in gifts and grants from 2,811 contributors. In that year it raised $2.2 million of in-kind donations and sponsorships for school supplies serving 12,320 students in 13 school districts and awarded $1.9 million to 30 area nonprofits delivering direct services to low-income people in need in addition to distribution of funds from various other grants.[2]

That first drive in 1931 benefitted nine agencies in the city: Asso-

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ciated Relief, Harmon Playfield, the Chamber of Commerce Emergency Fund, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Red Cross, the Tuberculosis Seal sale, the City Library, and the Crippled Children's Society. They raised the money this way: "Each person in the city who is regularly employed will be asked to give one day's salary to the fund for operation of the nine agencies during the next year. ...Those who desire that their money be used for any particular agency may so designate on their card, and the amount stipulated will go to the fund advertised."[3]

Three of those original beneficiary organizations—the Red Cross, the Boy Scouts, and the Girl Scouts—are still among the 36 agencies now served by the United Way of Northwest Arkansas.[4]

The Community Chest Fails *unless* YOU Help!

Hundreds of Your Neighbors Are in Need ....

Will You Help Them

STARVATION is a dramatic word, unreal to you. Yet around the corner live some folks to whom starvation has become a household word, very bitter. They have learned to pull their belts a little tighter and get along without three "squares" a day.

Where the Responsibility Rests

Fayetteville Must Pay

The zero hour is here—It's up to you to decide—Shall we have one drive for all Or Be confronted with requests through-out the year....They Must Have Help

THIS AD DONATED BY THE FOLLOWING FIRMS:

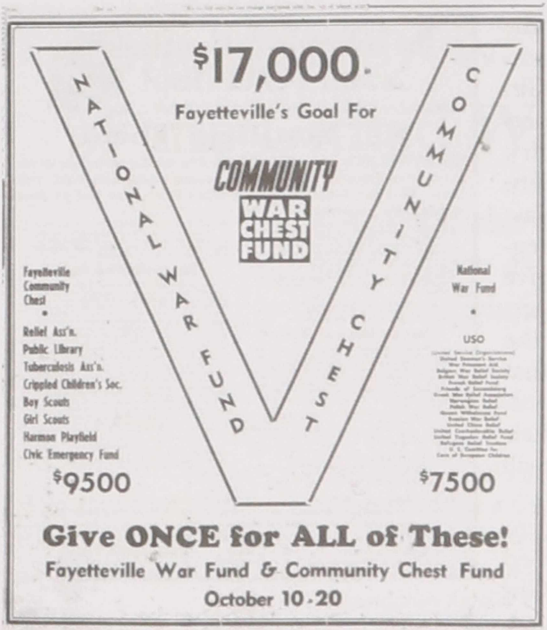
LinkWay Stores · Varsity Shop · The Razorback Toggery
Guisinger Music House · Ozark Grocer Co. · Lewis Brothers

Fayetteville Community Chest ad dated November 14, 1931. From the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat.*

The organizers let the town know they meant business about this. In the dawning hours of November 17, 1931, they made loud noises and lots of it. "Having waked the entire city at 6 o'clock this morning with shrieks of sirens and blare of whistles announcing an 'extra' edition declaring war against hunger, cold, disease and unemployment, workers gathered at 7 o'clock at the Mountain Inn to receive final instructions regarding the campaign for the Community Chest," the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* reported.[5]

What happened in those early days of Fayetteville's drive and what happens annually in the expanded two-county regional United Way drives traces back to 1887 in Denver, when that city's Charity Organization Society coordinated a single fund-raising drive for 22 local agencies. By 1913 Cleveland started the first drive under the title of Community Chest. Fayetteville's 1931 inaugural project was one of more than 1,000 new Community Chest organizations founded by 1948.[6]

Fayetteville's Community Chest was the region's only such organization for 20 years. During the Great Depression years, it took small steps during hard times for the U.S. and local economy. Its second drive in 1932 raised the fund-raising goal to $16,500 but came up with only $9,000. In 1933 it targeted $17,500, lowered the goal to $10,000 in the middle of the drive, and collected $8,710. University of Arkansas students joined the team as the drive aimed for $14,587 but raised only about half that amount.[7]



This "giant V" ad from October 1943 combined calls to donate for local causes and the war effort. From the *Northwest Arkansas Times*.

The drive reached its goal for the first time in 1939 after setting a more modest target of $9,000. The campaign in 1940 also succeeded and the 1941 drive was within $800 of meeting its goal when the attack on Pearl Harbor upended American life.[8]

The onset of World War II brought a new dimension to the Fayetteville Community Chest as it joined forces with the National War Fund. A month-long drive in October 1943 aimed to support a coordinated plan to aid 17 national agencies and war appeals along with the Community Chest's locally supported organizations.

"It enables each donor to give to all at one time, eliminates duplication of service and effort, the cost of separate campaigns and saves manpower and womanpower for other effort," said Virgil Blossom, the Fayetteville school superintendent who also served as Washington County's National War Fund chairman. "It also makes for financial economy."[9]

The nation's postwar years of economic growth extended to Northwest Arkansas as the region's first organized communitywide fund-raising project outside of Fayetteville was launched in 1950. The Bentonville Community Fund was the product of the city's chamber of commerce. Seven agencies benefitted from the first drive: the Ozark Playgrounds Association, the city library, the Cancer Fund, the Salvation Army, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and Civic Emergency.[10]

"The Bentonville Community Fund is the outgrowth of a demand on the part of the Bentonville public that something practical and constructive be done locally about the raising of funds for the various social welfare, civic and character building budgets," said Bruce Williams, chamber of commerce manager.[11]

Springdale joined the action with the establishment of its Community Fund in 1955. In 1960, fund chairman Bob Bitter explained in a letter to the business community the rationale for the $30,000 goal that year—a $3,500 increase from the previous year:

Springdale has grown faster than any community in Arkan-

sas with well over 10,000 population. Such growth is not possible without the support of the businesses and individuals who give willingly to the organizations comprising the Community Fund. What sufficed five years ago or even one year ago is not enough to support this continued growth this year or in the years to come. Considering the funds needed for our continued growth the worker who will call on you will ask you for a larger contribution this year.[12]

Springdale's campaigns continued through the decade with the organization changing its name to Springdale United Fund in July 1967. Two years later it established a trust fund with an initial investment of $20,000 to be used in case of a local disaster.[13]

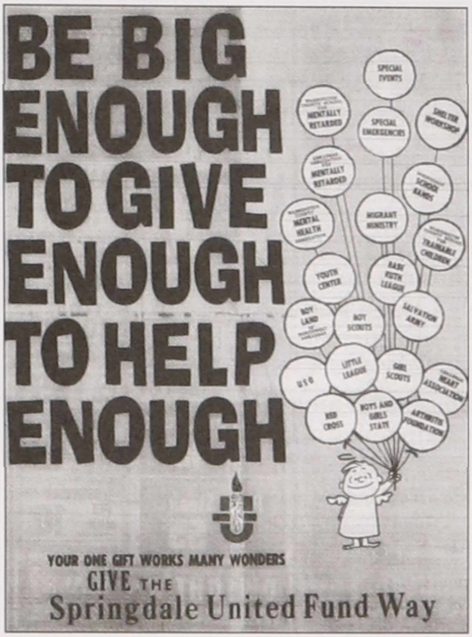
In the 1970s the United Fund established a long-running cooperative arrangement with the Springdale Chamber of Commerce. Virginia Stone, a part-time administrative employee at the chamber, took on additional part-time work to supervise United Fund activities in 1973 and the next year became its secretary-bookkeeper. Stone maintained her role with the city's United Fund/United Way until its 1992 merger with the Fayetteville counterpart, when she left the United Way to devote herself solely to chamber work.[14]

Meanwhile in Benton County, more local fund drive organizations were taking root. The United Fund of Rogers was established in May 1971 as a successor to the Rogers Community Fund, followed by the United Way of Siloam Springs in October 1976. Bentonville's Community Fund widened its reach to become the United Way of Bentonville/Bella Vista in August 1979 before it split three years later with the founding of the Bella Vista United Fund.[15]

The Bentonville Community Fund in 1971 went the distance to gain some attention from local citizens—or at least the distance that could be covered with slow transportation. Mayor Ernest Lawrence and officials of the Community Fund rode tricycles in a downtown parade of bicycles, bands, and cheerleaders that kicked off that fall's drive. Volunteer workers canvassed neighborhoods in search of donations to supplement the usual efforts within local businesses.[16]

The newly separate Bella Vista United Fund required some adjustments to accommodate public perception when it launched in 1982. Although the drive was no longer part of the Bentonville organization, the two groups agreed that the United Way of Bentonville/Bella Vista would keep Bella Vista in its name. Both organizations planned to have overlap in funding for agencies as well as solicitation within each community.

Lynn Richardson of the Bella Vista United Fund board said his community wanted a separate drive because nobody there had been solicited for contributions in the previous two years. Under the plan, the Bella Vista United Fund would act as an agent for the United Way of Bentonville/Bella Vista. Richardson told the boards for both organizations that a drive



An ad for the Springdale United Fund Way from September 1968. Ad from the *Springdale News*.

among Bella Vistans could result in more money for Bentonville. "No one will get hurt," he said, "There should be more money than there was before."[17]

The merger of the Fayetteville and Springdale organizations into a Washington County United Way was still more than a decade away in 1980 when the idea first generated serious discussion. The two cities' organizations reviewed a proposal for a merged group and scheduled a public meeting to discuss the plan in November or December 1980.[18] A February 1981 memo from the proposed organization's joint budget committee listed procedures for local beneficiary agencies to request funding and also included a list of the committee's members from both cities.[19] But the plans weren't realized and by that fall the two cities maintained their separate drives and organizations.

Some name changes were under way during the decade. The United Fund of Fayetteville renamed itself the United Way of Fayetteville in January 1987.[20] In March 1987 the Springdale United Fund became the United Way of Springdale.[21]

Serious efforts at a Washington County merger resumed with joint budget meetings of the Fayetteville and Springdale agencies in 1989.[22] The stage was set for the actual merger three years later when the United Way of Washington County was formed.

The merger coincided with a growing trend toward regionalization in Northwest Arkansas in the early 1990s. Three local newspapers—*The Springdale News*, the *Northwest Arkansas Times* in Fayetteville and the *Benton County Daily Record* in Bentonville—switched from afternoon to morning publication and aimed their coverage at audiences beyond their respective cities. Public officials of county and city governments in Washington and Benton counties collaborated to establish the regional board that built the facility in Highfill now known as Northwest Arkansas National Airport. Interstate 49 (then known as Interstate 540) was under construction and its completion from Bentonville to Fort Smith in 1998 would streamline travel among the cities. The concept of "local interests" was beginning to expand beyond a town's city limits.

In that atmosphere, the newly formed United Way of Washington

County's first campaign in the fall of 1992 raised $1.2 million.[23] JoAnn Sandlin, executive director of the Fayetteville United Way, was named executive director of the merged agency. Virginia Stone, executive director of the Springdale United Way, remained in a full-time role at the Springdale Chamber of Commerce and was named an ex-officio member of the Washington County board. The board consisted of 10 members each from Fayetteville and Springdale and 10 more from other areas of the county.[24]

The establishment of new United Way organizations and subsequent mergers also began in Benton County in the 1990s. The Spavinaw Valley United Way started in October 1990 followed by the United Way of Decatur in July 1991. In May 1994, United Ways of Bentonville, Decatur, Spavinaw Valley, and Siloam Springs merged into the United Way of Benton County. They were joined in January 2001 by the Bella Vista United Fund and the Pea Ridge United Fund. In January 2002, the Rogers-Lowell United Way came on board to make the United Way of Benton County the county's sole and comprehensive such agency.[25]

"We feel it's just going to increase our capacity to raise money," said Holly Sparks Hill, the executive director of the Rogers-Lowell United Way who became vice president of resource development of the new organization. "I'm hoping that it's going to make giving easier because, often, people live in a different community than they work."[26]

The new Benton County United Way agency lived five years before joining Washington County to form the United Way of Northwest Arkansas in July 2007.[27] It established offices in Lowell where today it serves Washington, Benton, and Madison counties in Arkansas (with a metropolitan population estimate of 560,709 in 2021)[28] and McDonald County, Missouri.

The two-county merger was a years-long process. A few months before the Benton County organizations consolidated into one, there was already talk of the need for a regionwide agency. A 2001 request for proposals facilitated by the Springdale-based Community Care Foundation took note of the three United Ways then operating in the two counties: those serving Washington County, Rogers-Lowell, and Benton County.

"The United Way organizations have responded through increased fundraising efforts as well as increased efficiency through consolidation of what were many small agencies into three current agencies," the memo said. "The corporate community has requested that further consolidations be considered in order to reflect the changing pattern of the home/work lives of local residents." It cited a goal of facilitating a planning process with the objective of forming a single United Way for Northwest Arkansas.[29]

Six years later it happened. An editorial in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* summed up the rationale behind the two-county merger:

> Some of us old-timers can remember when Northwest Arkan-

sas was little more than a bunch of different small towns connected by meandering highways. We were referred to as the Ozarks. But nowadays, the words Northwest Arkansas conjure up an economic giant, often drawing notice on the national level....

This merger of the two United Ways makes a lot of sense. After all, they do the same kind of work. Both provide money for a variety of nonprofit services—from the Red Cross to literacy councils and boys and girls clubs. (The list of organizations that receive help from the United Ways is a long one.)

No reduction in services is planned, nor any reduction in staff. But the two United Ways can expect to operate more efficiently as one, since their merger will eliminate some duplication.[30]

Today the United Way of Northwest Arkansas focuses on enhancing early childhood development, improving the health and wellbeing of the community, expanding community volunteer and leadership opportunities, and encouraging the development of nonprofit organizations.

"United Way has been serving Northwest Arkansas for almost a century," said Jackie D. Hancock Jr., president and CEO of United Way of Northwest Arkansas. "Throughout that time, we've supported the community through grants, connections, collaboration, programs and training. Over time, we've adapted based on residents' needs, like expanding the Arkansas 211 call center statewide to share essential resources with families, and hosting nonprofit roundtables that gather peers to address key issues and how we work to solve them together. We love our community and are excited to continue supporting our neighbors in need to help everyone thrive."[31]

With dozens of local corporate partners, the regional United Way concentrates on supporting projects such as emergency food and shelter programs, community investment grants for children's early learning and families' readiness for the work force, access to affordable prescription medications, children's access to books through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, corporate support for local nonprofit organizations' projects, and numerous other efforts.[32]

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The Headquarters House Museum Garden Evolves

Guided by the hands of the Washington County Master Gardeners

By Lee Anne K. Wiekerkehr

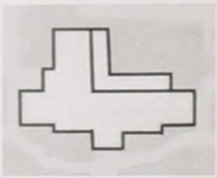
On February 18, 1852, Judge Jonas Tebbetts purchased a four-acre lot at the corner of College and Dickson streets for $400. The larger context of the Tebbetts home is shown on maps as a parcel within the grid layout of the City of Fayetteville which references Thomas Jefferson's influence.

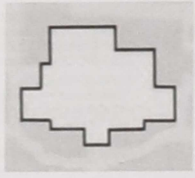
In assessing Jefferson's importance to the landscape of America, we must not forget that he expressed the country's future as democratic (and commercial) society in his deployment of the non-hierarchical national grid as a means of subdividing the continent and selling its land.[1]

The Greek Revival architectural style of the Tebbetts house, completed in 1853, became a predominant style between 1820 and 1850 as influenced by Jefferson's dream "to keep life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" ever present in the eyes of American citizens. After 1820, American statesmen liked to think of America as a reincarnation of Greece and wanted architecture to reflect Greek rather than more general classical ideals and architectural forms.[2]

The layout of the garden reflected functional aspects of growing fruits and vegetables, grazing and caring for animals, preserving meats in the smokehouse, and storing foods in the root cellar. The Tebbetts family added ornamental plants to their American frontier landscape due to the judge's success. The style of the day was, once again, influenced by Jefferson.

Lee Anne K. Wiederkehr, ASLA, is a landscape architect serving the Washington County Historical Society as chair of the Garden & Grounds Committee and collaborates with the UofA Master Gardeners to interpret the historic landscape. Lee Anne & husband Mike are Arkansas natives who spent their careers in California and happily call Fayetteville home.





On the left, two plats show the "footprints" of the Tebbetts house.
Far left: original plat from 1853.
Near left: 1920s plat, after Appleby expansion. Courtesy Washington County Historical Society.
Below, Fayetteville GIS map. The dot-dash line outlines the original Tebbetts property, and the dotted line shows the current Headquarters House Museum and Gardens property. Map courtesy of City of Fayetteville GIS Mapping System.

During the summer of 1862, Jonas Tebbetts rode to Missouri upon threat of death from Confederate forces because of his Union sympathies. His family followed in October, abandoning their beloved home. The house was purchased and occupied by the David Walker family. In later years, a series of owners allowed the house to deteriorate until the Charles Appleby family bought it in the early 1920s.[3]

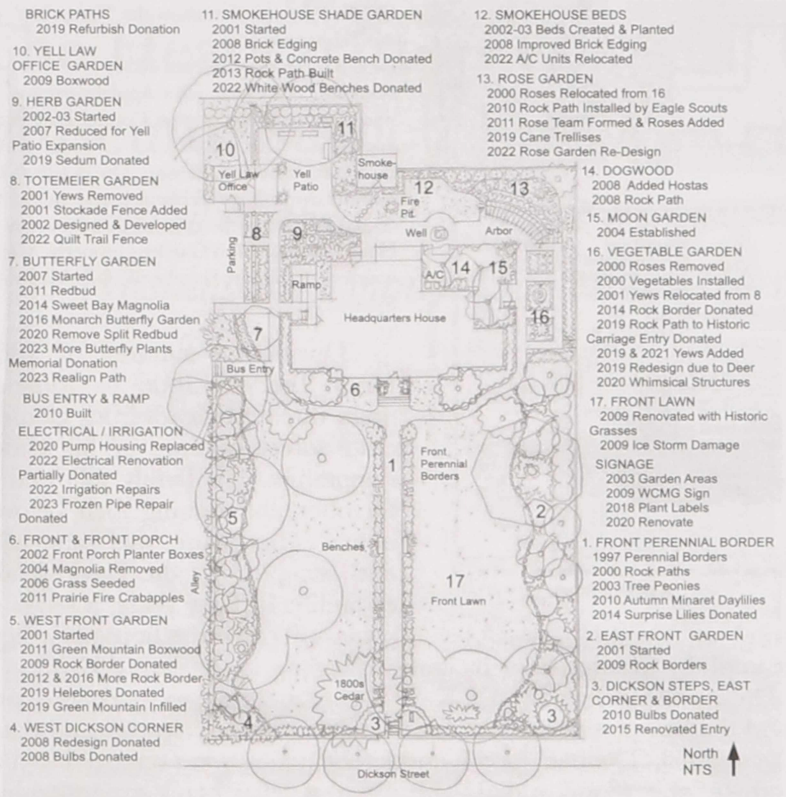
The Applebys employed a Kansas City architect to modernize and expand the house with instructions to duplicate the character and detail of the original. The back porch and kitchen wing were removed and all the present rear rooms added, with the root cellar being expanded into a basement. The smokehouse is the only surviving outbuilding.[4] The two plats seen in the images above are from 1853 and the 1920s and show, first, the original outline of the house and, second, the outline after the Appleby expansion.

Electricity, plumbing, central heat, and closets were added. This "modern, livable" house was enjoyed by two more families, including Paris Green who bought it in 1939,[5] before WCHS acquired it with the deed dated August 18, 1967.[6] The property description includes the north property line to include the Smokehouse[7] on the 0.8161-acre lot.[8]

Because the house had been headquarters for both sides in the Civil War and was to become the headquarters of WCHS, the name was changed to Headquarters House[9] and is now known as Headquarters House Museum (HQHM).

Washington County Master Gardeners at Headquarters House

Contributing to the historical authenticity of HQHM are its gardens which have been designed and maintained using plant species of the 19th century. These gardens would not be possible without the enthusiasm and dedication from the Washington County Master Gardeners (WCMG).



Each gardener has made a valuable contribution. WCMG reviews sanctioned gardens annually to determine if the project should continue the next year. At this point, the garden project is at 26 years and counting!

WCMG has been involved with this project since 1997. WCMG volunteers plant and maintain the garden areas at Headquarters House to reflect the character of the mid-1800s. They assist WCHS with garden programs and tours for visitors and maintain an accurate listing of plants, their garden location, and year they were bedded. Selected plant materials are planted and maintained to interpret the gardens when the Tebbetts family lived in the house until 1865.

The garden plant palette includes heirloom plants mentioned in Marion Tebbetts Banes' diary, as well as ornamentals, natives, medicinal, and culinary herbs used in the Civil War period.

In 2006, grass was seeded in beds beside the front porch by WCMG and horticulture professor John King. During the era of the Tebbetts, houses did not have screens or air conditioning. Therefore, grass was planted at the house foundation instead of shrubs to reduce the potential of having snakes come into the house. In 2009, King renovated the lawn

Washington County Historical Society

announces

The 15th Annual Competition for Articles on History of Washington County

The Washington County Historical Society announces the 15th annual competition for two awards for articles about the history of Washington County. Each award carries an honorarium of $250. The two categories of awards are:

* The Walter J. Lemke Prize for best article on Washington County history, with preference given to subjects outside Fayetteville;
* The Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize for best article on Washington County history, with a focus on Fayetteville.

Topics can address any aspect of county history, including archeology, lives of individuals, architecture, arts and crafts, or records of institutions, and can be set in any time period. All historians – both professional and amateur – are invited to submit articles. Winners will be recognized at the society's annual meeting in October.

Deadline for submissions is June 30, 2024.

Judging is based on contributions to the expansion of the county's history; originality of the subject; and use of primary and secondary sources. Articles must be original material, and not previously published.

Submissions must be typed, and preferably include endnotes. Length – not including endnotes – can range from 2,500 words to 5,000 words. The title page should be headed: "WCHS Prize," followed by the manuscript full title, and the author's name, mailing address, telephone number, and email.

Entries become the property of the Washington County Historical Society and will not be returned. All submissions will be considered for publication in the WCHS journal *Flashback*. WCHS reserves the right to award one or no prizes. Back issues of *Flashback* are available at the Fayetteville Public Library.

Submit manuscripts by June 30, 2024, by mail or email:

* By mail: Patsy Watkins, WCHS Prize, Washington County Historical Society, 118 E. Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701.
* Email: Patsy Watkins at pwatkins@uark.edu

For questions, contact Watkins at pwatkins@uark.edu.

Right: 2007 WCMGs moving plants in the Herb Garden to accommodate the Yell Law Office Patio expansion, HQHM in the background.
Below: 2022 Herb Garden with the ramp and Quilt Trail Fence in the background. Visit the gardens to see one of the original stone well heads located in the Herb Garden's stone path.
Both photos courtesy of WCMG and Lee Anne Wiederkehr.

to include more historic grasses.

Other amendments to the gardens were donated by various patrons. To name a few:

• 2011—WCHS's Judy Brittenum added two flowering Prairie Fire Crabapple trees in the front lawn area to evoke the Tebbetts' fruit orchard that existed until about the time 324 N. College was built [See GIS map, p. 125].

• 2021—Jan Hayes and Shirley Durning, two of the most experienced Master Gardeners, volunteered for more than 20 years. They have worked on the WCMG Front Garden team and maintained the East Side and Dickson Wall areas of the gardens and the Vegetable Garden.

They donated Hellebores and Ferns from the late Betty Swope's home garden. (Swope passed away early in 2021; she was an important person in the HQH and WCMG families for 23 years.) They also tended a new Dogwood tree planted in early spring.

The HQHM Gardens comprise several distinct individual gardens named in 2003, such as the Front Perennial Border, the East and West Front Beds with undulating rock borders, the Herb Garden, the Smokehouse, Shady Smokehouse, and Yell Law Office gardens, some of which are seen in accompanying photos. In addition, there are the following:

Well Area. This historic element of the garden was the water source for the Tebbetts. The Well Area has evolved through the years and has included self-seeded plants, perennials, and annuals. It has a distinctive spring and summer look. In 2009, plants included *Impatiens balsamia* and *Verbena bonariensis*.

Yell Law Office Garden. The Yell Law Office building has plantings beside and behind the structure. Boxwood shrubs define the north edge of WCHS property. Herbs and Coreopsis are often planted in

Left: A photo from 2012 shows the Bus Entry to the HQHM office. A Redbud tree stands in a field of groundcover, lined with Daffodil bulbs. The ramp to the side door, the Smokehouse, and stockade fence are in the background.
Below: In a 2015 photo, two WCMGs stand in the completed Monarch Butterfly Garden. Photos courtesy WCMG and Lee Anne Wiederkehr.

sunny areas by the Smokehouse. The Yell Law Office building was greatly improved by Betty Nichols and Truman Stamps, who planted Daylilies and Beautyberries and cleaned the area of old wood and trash. This is now an established garden area.

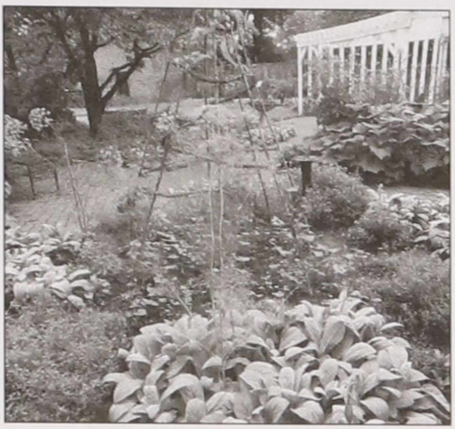
Rose Garden. In 2011, the WCMG Rose Team, with volunteers Jacqueline King, Annette Pianalto, Jaylon Haley, and Chandana Becker, established 10 new Rose varieties planted at the north and east fence area. Six of the 10 have survived.

Older and heirloom rose varieties were added to provide color and additional interest. Other perennials, annuals, and climbing vines enhance the Rose garden area and attract bugs that might otherwise attack the roses. Dawn Fisher, Rose Garden Leader, with team members Audley Hall, Lynette Terrell, and Ruth Cohoon, have planted, transplanted, weeded, and pruned the Roses and other plants. In late summer, Fisher and Hall created a cane trellis to help contain the extra tall Shasta daisies. Terrell and Shirley Durning kept the tobacco worms off the tall flowering tobacco planted behind the arbor. In 2022, Roses were relocated to directly behind arbor around the rock pathway.

The Moon Garden was established in 2004 with Datura, Dusty Miller, Moonflower, Tobacco, Jasmine, and Four O'Clocks.

2020 Demonstration Garden. Common Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) is now happily growing at the HQHM. This medicinal plant can be brewed as a cold remedy tea; the roots and flowers treat earaches and croup; leaves can be made into a poultice to sooth sunburn. Native Americans used the felt-like leaves to line their moccasins. Pioneers, like the Tebbetts family, grew Mellein near outhouses. It is a biennial and re-seeds itself freely as seen during the pandemic when the WCMGs stayed home in 2019.

Wooden benches were replaced in the Smokehouse Shade Garden on the Yell Patio. WCMG Betty Nichols volunteered her husband, Dr.



The Moon Garden, established in 2004, with a garden structure created by WCMGs Terry Hedden and Talya Boerner. The Arbor is in the upper right corner and behind it the Rose Garden. Photo courtesy WCHS.

David Nichols, to build new benches and donated the materials. The new benches replicate old ones that were built with square nails. The new bench constructions occurred in fast order and look fantastic in the gardens. WCHS is so thankful for the Nichols' contribution to the garden.

The HQHM's Washington County Master Gardeners have been recognized for their efforts at Headquarters House by being selected as the WCMG Sanctioned Project of the Year three times in 2004, 2011, and 2021, shortly after their hiatus due to the pandemic. This dedicated team is the only group to be recognized three times!

WCMGs planned and planted to prepare for the 2022 WCMG Garden Gate Tour that attracted more than 250 visitors to the garden. Museum tours given by WCHS board member Regina Sherwood and Maylon Rice's photo frame enhanced the event and the visitors' experience.

WCHS is eternally grateful for each Master Gardener and the WCMG Garden Leaders Geri Alvis, Kristi Campbell, Wanda Gore, emeritus Dian Holmes, Jan Lefler, and Terry Smyers for their good cheer leading the group to "whistle while they work." Because of WCMG's good works, Washington County has the fabulous HQHM garden.

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The Jonathan Selby Murder

The event that led to the first legal hanging of a woman in Arkansas

By Susan Parks-Spencer

Three members of one family were hanged in 1845 for the murder of Washington County resident Jonathan Selby. Lavinia Burnett was found guilty of Selby's murder and became the first female legally executed in the State of Arkansas on November 8, 1845, near Fayetteville.[1] Also found guilty of Selby's murder were her husband, Crawford Burnett, and at a later date, their son, John Burnett. The couple's executions were also the first to be lawfully carried out in Washington County.[2]

Crawford and Lavinia Burnett lived with their son, John, and 15-year-old daughter Minerva, near Cane Hill.[3] Several miles from their home was the residence of Jonathan Selby, whom John Burnett had previously worked for.[4] Selby lived by himself and was known by local residents as a somewhat reclusive man. On August 29, 1845, Selby's body was found by a neighbor with head injuries from a hand-axe or "tomahawk" that was eventually discovered nearby. After several days with no suspect located, a "vigilance committee" was organized and soon learned that the Burnetts' daughter had been seen speaking "in close conversation" with her cousin, Harden Sharp.[5] When asked about Selby's murder, the elder Burnett couple's statements created enough suspicion that the following day a posse arrested them both. They were taken to Cane Hill for further questioning, along with their daughter, Minerva. In the meantime, John Burnett had disappeared and taken what little cash his parents had at their home.[6]

Minerva Burnett told the authorities that her parents had come up with the plan to rob and kill Jonathan Selby and had encouraged her brother John to carry out the plan. Following their daughter's confession, the Burnett couple were moved to Fayetteville, and a trial was scheduled for early October. The Burnetts were only able to hire one attorney, but Fayetteville

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Susan Parks-Spencer is a fifth-generation west Washington County resident who enjoys researching and writing articles about the history of that area. Her most recent book is At War and on the Home Front, *published in 2020.*

lawyer Isaac Murphy, who was later elected Governor of Arkansas, volunteered his services for the defense.[7]

During the trial, Minerva Burnett and Harden Sharp both testified for the prosecution. The motive for the crime was monetary; when John Burnett worked for Selby he had observed a "pocket book" full of money. Sharp corroborated his cousin Minerva's testimony, adding that he was forced to participate in the crime by the Burnett couple and their son, but had waited outside while the murder took place. After Burnett killed Selby, Sharp ran into the house, stating that he had become scared when he heard "groans and strangling" and then dogs barking. Burnett used the murder weapon to open a trunk in the house where Sharp found the pocket book. The two men rushed back to the Burnett's home where John Burnett burned his shirt and cleaned his pants. Afterwards, Burnett opened the pocket book and found $50.[8]

Crawford and Lavinia Burnett were found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. Gallows were constructed at a location that later became known as Gallows Hill and is now part of the Fayetteville National Cemetery and Oaks Cemetery.[9] On November 8, 1845, the couple were hanged in front of a large crowd, reportedly holding hands as the trapdoor opened. Not long after their execution, John Burnett was arrested in Missouri and returned to Fayetteville where he was convicted of Selby's murder and hanged on December 26, 1845.[10]

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Here's What's Cookin' in Northwest Arkansas

100+ years of "community cookbooks" feeding bodies and souls

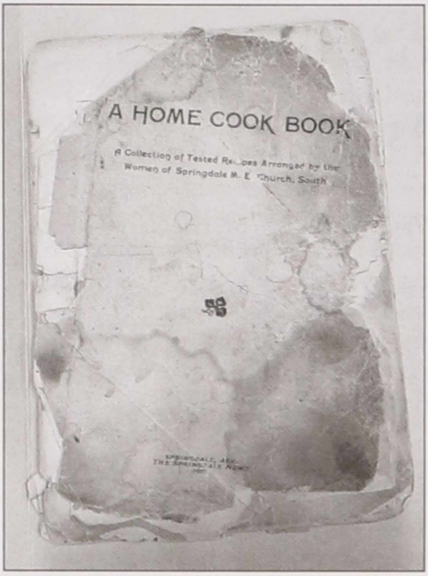
By Patsy G. Watkins

In 1901 the women of the Springdale Methodist Episcopal Church, South,[1] published a cookbook, a slim paperback titled *A Home Cook Book: A Collection of Tested Recipes*. It was organized by sections labeled simply "Vegetables," "Soups," or "Meats," each one opening with an instructive quotation from Shakespeare, the Bible, or a poet. John Milton, for example, opened the "Soups" section with this advice: "In what thou eatest and drinkest, seek from them due nourishment . . . ."

Most recipes in the book are short. They give simple directions and ingredients that made sense a hundred years ago but would likely stump cooks today—such as the "two good-sized potatoes" that were called for in Vegetable Soup. Other recipes, for breads and meat dishes, were considerably more complicated. Following each recipe was the name of its contributor, all of whom were women. The book was dedicated to those who "have so kindly aided in bringing [it] before the public."

A Home Cook Book was likely sold as a fundraiser for the church, making it part of a popular American tradition that began during the Civil War and remains strong today—that of the "charitable" cookbook, a local or themed collection of recipes sold to raise funds for a good cause. They were also known as community cookbooks, compiled cookbooks, fundraising cookbooks, or regional cookbooks.[2]

Patsy G. Watkins is a former University of Arkansas faculty member in journalism, where she also served as department chair. She has worked in newspapers and magazines, and on the staff of Texas congressman Jake Pickle. She is editor of the WCHS journal Flashback.



The cover of *A Home Cook Book: A Collection of Tested Recipes*, published in 1901 by the Springdale Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Now in the collection of the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.

Women were the instigators behind these cookbooks. Working together as members of religious and civic groups, they collected recipes, occasionally sold advertising, assembled the books, and produced them to raise money for local causes they supported, such as churches, schools, and libraries, or worthy national issues such as women's suffrage. The books were so successful that, according to historians' estimates, from 2,000 to 3,000 of them were published from the Civil War years until the early 1900s.[3]

Their popularity continued through the 20th century and their numbers multiplied. It's impossible to know how many have been published since the 1860s, as the books were not systematically collected or catalogued by libraries. Nor of course does anyone know how much money the books raised for good causes, though one estimate suggests as much as tens of millions of dollars.[4]

Charitable cookbooks have been a tradition in Washington County, going back at least as far as the 1901 Springdale church women's book, and maybe even further. We don't know how many have been published here or when they started, but over the years used copies produced from 1900 to today have shown up in book donations to local public libraries. The University of Arkansas Special Collections Arkansas Cookbook Collection now has roughly 120 of these local books, and Shiloh Museum of Ozark History has its own smaller collection. In addition, public libraries in Elkins, West Fork, Prairie Grove, and Farmington all have some copies. In total, there are fewer than 150 books in these libraries, with the earliest one being Shiloh's 1901 *A Home Cook Book*.

One thing for certain, though, the books are significant to home cooks in Northwest Arkansas, and as popular here as they historically have been nationwide. Rather than libraries, most of the surviving local cookbooks are more likely found in private collections—on shelves in kitchens where they've seen a lot of use. Their pages are stained, paper-clipped, dog-eared, and underlined, evidence that they are the go-to sources for much-loved recipes over the years. But their value for many who own and collect them is often more personal—as treasured connections to memories of certain foods and the individuals who contributed the recipes.

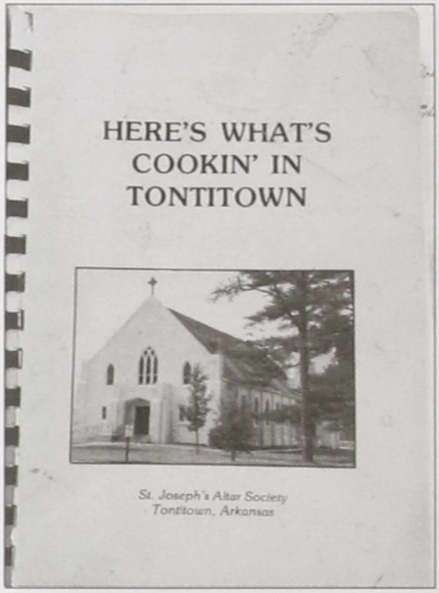
Dee Ness, a former WCHS board member and Farmington native, appreciates the family and community heritage represented in the eight cookbooks handed down to her and her husband by their parents and grandparents. She can flip through the pages of her oldest book, dated 1950, and see the names of people and family members:

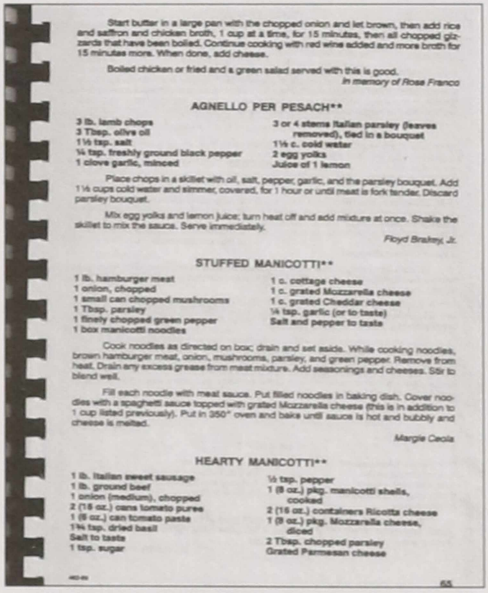
> Part of what makes it special for me is that it has a meatloaf recipe from my grandmother, Maurine Mayes Buchanan. The recipe does not contain any surprise or secret ingredients, but it does hold sentimental value because it takes me back to grandma's kitchen. As I read the recipe, I can remember watching her, in her apron, stirring the garden-fresh green beans and pulling the meatloaf from the oven. I remember their house, the wonderful smells from the kitchen and the family gatherings we had there.[5]

Regina Sherwood, who oversees the WCHS Bookstore, at one time had about 30 of the cookbooks, some which she bought to support organizations' fundraising and others that were gifts or were inherited from her mother. Like Ness, she has a personal connection to certain books. One with special meaning is *Foods a la Louisiana* that was published by the Louisiana Farm Bureau in 1980:

> My Aunt Thelma, also my godmother, was a phenomenal cook.... She and her friends submitted lots of recipes to this book.

Left: Cover of undated cookbook *Here's What's Cookin' in Tontitown*, published by the St. Joseph's Altar Society. Possible date is 1960. Private collection.
Right: A page from *Country Cookbook, Recipes from Tontitown*, published by St. Joseph's Church in 1989. "Authentic Italian cookery" recipes marked with two asterisks. Both cookbooks from Arkansas Cookbook Collection, University of Arkansas Libraries, Special Collections.





Start butter in a large pan with the chopped onion and let brown, then add rice and saffron and chicken broth, 1 cup at a time, for 15 minutes, then all chopped glizards that have been boiled. Continue cooking with red wine added and more broth for 15 minutes more. When done, add cheese.

Boiled chicken or fried and a green salad served with this is good.

In memory of Rose Franco

AGNELLO PER PESACH**

3 lb. lamb chops
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 clove garlic, minced
3 or 4 stems Italian parsley (leaves removed), tied in a bouquet
1½ c. cold water
2 egg yolks
Juice of 1 lemon

Place chops in a skillet with oil, salt, pepper, garlic, and the parsley bouquet. Add 1½ cups cold water and simmer, covered, for 1 hour or until meat is fork tender. Discard parsley bouquet.

Mix egg yolks and lemon juice; turn heat off and add mixture at once. Shake the skillet to mix the sauce. Serve immediately.

Floyd Brakley, Jr.

STUFFED MANICOTTI**

1 lb. hamburger meat
1 onion, chopped
1 small can chopped mushrooms
1 Tbsp. parsley
1 finely chopped green pepper
1 box manicotti noodles
1 c. cottage cheese
1 c. grated Mozzarella cheese
1 c. grated Cheddar cheese
¼ tsp. garlic (or to taste)
Salt and pepper to taste

Cook noodles as directed on box; drain and set aside. While cooking noodles, brown hamburger meat, onion, mushrooms, parsley, and green pepper. Remove from heat. Drain any excess grease from meat mixture. Add seasonings and cheeses. Stir to blend well.

Fill each noodle with meat sauce. Put filled noodles in baking dish. Cover noodles with a spaghetti sauce topped with grated Mozzarella cheese (this is in addition to 1 cup listed previously). Put in 350° oven and bake until sauce is hot and bubbly and cheese is melted.

Margie Ceola

HEARTY MANICOTTI**

1 lb. Italian sweet sausage
1 lb. ground beef
1 onion (medium), chopped
2 (16 oz.) cans tomato puree
1 (6 oz.) can tomato paste
1¼ tsp. dried basil
Salt to taste
1 tsp. sugar
½ tsp. pepper
1 (8 oz.) pkg. manicotti shells, cooked
2 (16 oz.) containers Ricotta cheese
1 (8 oz.) pkg. Mozzarella cheese, sliced
2 Tbsp. chopped parsley
Grated Parmesan cheese

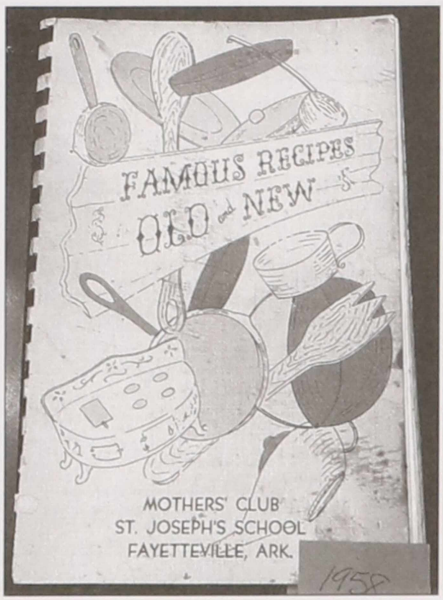
65

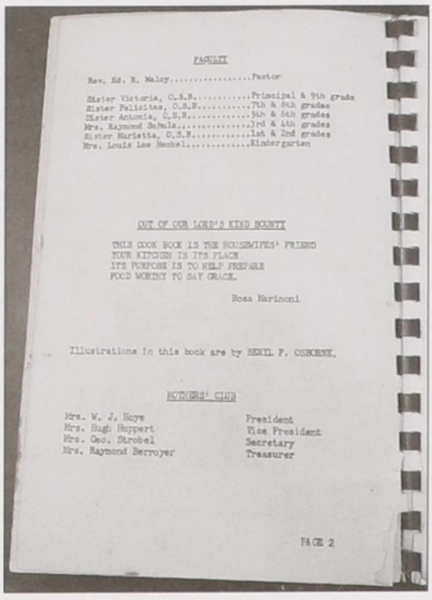
Aunt Thelma annotated much of the 340-page book with suggestions, comments, and her changes to recipes. She sent the cookbook as a gift. I love that all these notes are in her handwriting.[6]

Many of the recipes in the Washington County cookbooks over the years are for familiar Southern dishes—Summer Sausage, Fried Chicken, Bread and Butter Pickles, Sweet 7-Day Pickles, and countless variations of Peach Cobbler. The more recent cookbooks show an international interest with Arkansas versions of dishes that are Mexican (Old Mexican Enchiladas, Tamales), Chinese (Chinese Beef and Rice), and even Czechoslovakian (Kolaches). Desserts are plentiful (always the largest section of the cookbooks); the apparent favorites, based on repeated appearances, are Angel Food Cake, Snicker Doodles (aka Snickerdoodles), Red Devil's Food, and Applesauce Cake. Especially noteworthy is a recipe for Dark Fruit Cake which is claimed to be "about 100 years old." Most delightful, though, is the occasional helpful comment from a contributor about her recipe, such as the one for Suet Pudding which reassuringly notes, "This is fine."

There are no fewer than eight Tontitown cookbooks, and they stand out in their dedication to the town's Italian heritage. All include histories of both Tontitown and St. Joseph's Catholic Church and clearly reflect the deep respect and appreciation for the community's singular nature in

Left: Cover of *Famous Recipes, Old and New*, published by the Mother's Club, St. Joseph School, Fayetteville, in 1958.
Right: A page from *Famous Recipes, Old and New*, featuring a short poem by Rosa Marinoni. The book is from a private collection.

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Sister Victoria, O.S.B.....Principal & 9th grade
Sister Felicitas, O.S.B.....7th & 8th grades
Sister Antonia, O.S.B.....5th & 6th grades
Mrs. Raymond Schmit.....3rd & 4th grades
Sister Marietta, O.S.B.....1st & 2nd grades
Mrs. Louis Lee Henkel.....Kindergarten

OUT OF OUR LORD'S KIND BOUNTY

THIS COOK BOOK IS THE HOUSEWIVES' FRIEND
YOUR KITCHEN IS ITS PLACE
ITS PURPOSE IS TO HELP PREPARE
FOOD WORTHY TO SAY GRACE.

Rosa Marinoni

Illustrations in this book are by BERYL F. OSBORNE.

MOTHERS' CLUB

Mrs. W. J. Hoye	President
Mrs. Hugh Huppert	Vice President
Mrs. Geo. Strobel	Secretary
Mrs. Raymond Berroyer	Treasurer

PAGE 2

this area. In fact, one of St. Joseph's cookbooks, *Country Cookbook, Recipes from Tontitown* (1989), specifically marked certain recipes with two asterisks as representing "authentic Italian cookery." Perhaps as a fond memorial, recipes are at times named for cooks who had been known for special dishes. There are recipes that are unique to the Tontitown cookbooks, such as Mama Z's Rolls (from Mama Z's Restaurant), Calves' Liver Venetian Style, Gnochi, and Agnello per Pesach. Apparently, a local favorite was Italian Cream Cake, which is represented in one cookbook alone with five different recipes.

Also emphasizing local heritage are the books from the St. Joseph Catholic School Mother's Club of Fayetteville. The 1958 issue, *Famous Recipes Old and New*, not only listed the school's faculty, the children in grades K-9, and the members of the Mothers' Club, but also included poetry by Rosa Marinoni, a former Arkansas poet laureate and Fayetteville resident. The book's dedication to the school's children said this about the recipes: "We want no claim to fame and place no guarantees on [the recipes] other than the fact they have been home-tested and have pleased small boys and small girls with great satisfaction."

This personal, local connection has clearly been critical to the nationwide popularity of these cookbooks throughout their history of more than 150 years. In fact, it's one of the main points on which their value as fundraisers depends. The first known charitable cookbook is generally said to be *A Poetical Cook-Book* compiled by Maria J. Moss and published in Philadelphia in 1864. Moss's goal was to raise money for the Sanitary Commission of the Union Army to help pay for medical supplies.[7] The fund-raising strategy caught on. The idea of selling collections of local recipe favorites was picked up by other benevolent organizations, especially by religious groups, and spread quickly around the country.[8]

Historians suggest that the growth of community cookbooks in the post-Civil War years rested in part on women's realization that the books could give them a public voice in promoting the causes they supported. By publishing the cookbooks, they drew attention to these issues, which they could then champion and flex some political muscle with the money raised from selling books. Janice Longone, curator of American Culinary History at the University of Michigan, has written that,

> At a time when American women were without full political rights and representation, they found the community cookbook one very effective way to participate in the public life of the nation. Through voluntary organizations—charitable, educational, cultural, civic, professional, political, and religious—they created networks of mutual support, training grounds for organizing, and acceptable platforms from which to influence American life.[9]

Until recently, charitable cookbooks drew little attention from anybody except the cooks who bought them. Since the 1980s and '90s, however, scholars have been seeking out and studying these books for the

The 19 Washington County cookbooks reviewed for this article

A Home Cook Book: A Collection of Tested Recipes, 1901
Women of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Springdale
(Shiloh Museum of Ozark History collection)

The Gift Book, 1924
Missionary Society, Methodist Church, South,
Springdale
(Shiloh Museum of Ozark History collection)

Cooking 'Round the World and at Home, 1946(?)
Business & Professional Women's Club, Fayetteville
(UofA Arkansas Cookbook Collection)

What's Cookin'? in Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1948
Woman's Council, First Christian Church, Fayetteville
(UofA Arkansas Cookbook Collection)

Cook Book, 1955
Elkins Home Demonstration Club, Elkins
(UofA Arkansas Cookbook Collection)

Cook Book, 1956
W.S.C.S. [Women's Society of Christian Service] of Wesley Methodist Church, Springdale
(UofA Arkansas Cookbook Collection)

Famous Recipes Old and New, 1958
St. Joseph Catholic School Mothers' Club, Fayetteville
(UofA Arkansas Cookbook Collection)

Cooking Favorites of Elm Springs, 1965-1966
Women's Society of Christian Service, Elm Springs
(Shiloh Museum of Ozark History collection)

Junior Civic League Cookbook, 1960-1969
Junior Civic League, Fayetteville
(UofA Arkansas Cookbook Collection)

The Art of Cooking in Tontitown, 1960-1969(?)
St. Joseph's Altar Society, Tontitown
(UofA Arkansas Cookbook Collection)

A Collection of Recipes, 1978
Calvary Freewill Baptist Church, Springdale
(UofA Arkansas Cookbook Collection)

Here's What's Cookin' in Tontitown, undated
St. Joseph's Altar Society, Tontitown
(Private collection)

Our Favorite Recipes, 1983
St. Joseph's Altar Society, Tontitown
(Private collection)

Country Cookbook, Recipes from Tontitown, 1989
St. Joseph's Church, Tontitown
(Private collection)

Recipes from Tontitown, 1994
St. Joseph's Church, Tontitown
(Private collection)

Tontitown Traditions: Celebrating 100 Years of the Grape Festival, 1998
St. Joseph's Church, Tontitown
(Private collection)

A Taste of Tontitown: Recipes from Tontitown, 2004
St. Joseph's Church, Tontitown
(Private collection)

Memories and Traditions of Tontitown; A Collection of Recipes by the Parishioners of St. Joseph Catholic Church, their family members, and friends of Tontitown, Arkansas, 2017
St. Joseph's Church, Tontitown
(Private collection)

clues they can provide to women's domestic lives and values as expressed through the causes the books supported. They are interested in what these books might have meant to women; for example, through the bonding experience of coming together to compile recipes for a book, or the decision of a private individual to share her personal, perhaps best recipes for publication.

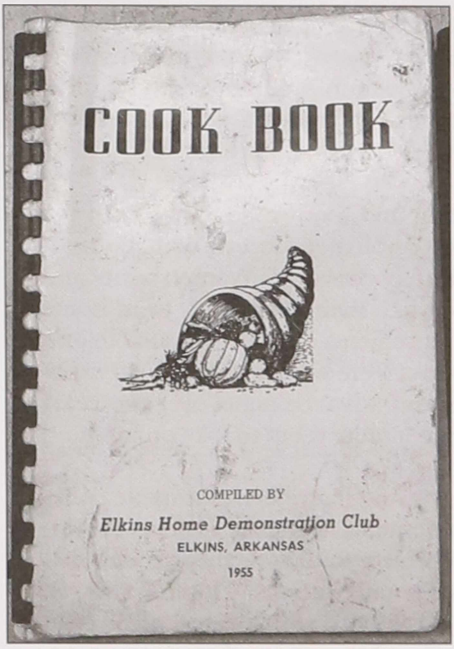
Also, researchers track how cooking and foodways change with the introduction of time- and labor-saving appliances, ovens with thermostats, and packaged ingredients that simplify cooking.[10] Women wrote and compiled these books for other women like themselves who were home cooks; therefore, they knew the local ingredients that were available and the kitchen work involved. Since the books were written from direct experience, their pages reflect the changes and advancements over the years that freed up women's time and energy, enabling them to take on jobs and careers.

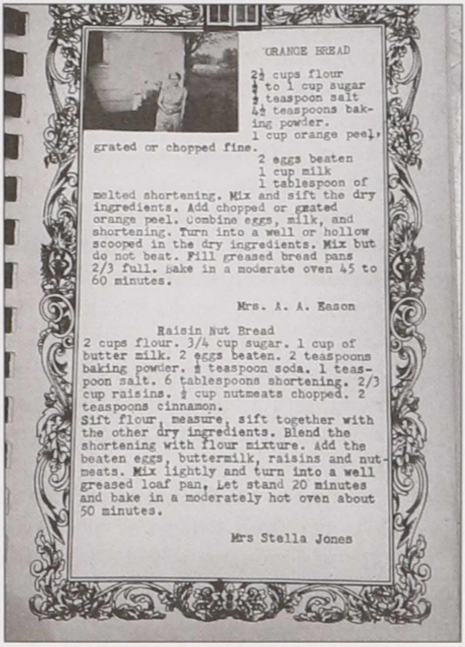
Perhaps as a consequence of the growing interest in charitable cookbooks for their potential in studying women's domestic history, the Library of Congress in 2009 launched a project to digitize these cookbooks in its collection beginning with the earliest publications. The first entry in the collection is Moss's 1864 *A Poetical Cook-Book*, which can now be read online. As of December 2021, the list has 146 entries, though none are from Arkansas.[11]

The Washington County cookbooks in local libraries published since 1901 are unevenly distributed over the hundred or so years. There are few examples dated from before the 1960s: only one from the 1920s, none from the 1930s, three from the 1940s, and couple from the '50s. Copies from the '60s, '70s, '80s, and '90s abound. Charitable cookbooks were published in Arkansas in the '30s—the Central Arkansas Library System has several, though none from Washington County. But it isn't too surprising that the very early books rarely survive. They were often made with cheap paper and binding and not very durable. The 1901 book for example now is fragile, its pages brittle and flaking. But, of course, it's the early books—1901 through the 1940s—that are most interesting to us for what they show about the lives and challenges for home cooks as "cookery" developed with more dependable appliances and packaged foods.

In general, the early books, the 1901 book included, were informal. They often lacked a title page, a copyright, table of contents, or sometimes even page numbers. The arrangement of their contents was almost always the same—first came appetizers, followed by soups, fish, meat, vegetables, salads, and desserts, which was consistently the largest section.

Books often included aphorisms which might offer advice, encouragement, and even humor, often geared specifically to women. The 1924 *Gift Book* of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, South, in Springdale cautioned readers in a dedication: "To Industrious Housewives... who master their work instead of allowing it to master them."





ORANGE BREAD

2½ cups flour
¾ to 1 cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt
4½ teaspoons baking powder.
1 cup orange peel, grated or chopped fine.
2 eggs beaten
1 cup milk
1 tablespoon of melted shortening. Mix and sift the dry ingredients. Add chopped or grated orange peel. Combine eggs, milk, and shortening. Turn into a well or hollow scooped in the dry ingredients. Mix but do not beat. Fill greased bread pans 2/3 full. Bake in a moderate oven 45 to 60 minutes.

Mrs. A. A. Eason

Raisin Nut Bread

2 cups flour. 3/4 cup sugar. 1 cup of butter milk. 2 eggs beaten. 2 teaspoons baking powder. ½ teaspoon soda. 1 teaspoon salt. 6 tablespoons shortening. 2/3 cup raisins. ½ cup nutmeats chopped. 2 teaspoons cinnamon.
Sift flour, measure, sift together with the other dry ingredients. Blend the shortening with flour mixture. Add the beaten eggs, buttermilk, raisins and nutmeats. Mix lightly and turn into a well greased loaf pan. Let stand 20 minutes and bake in a moderately hot oven about 50 minutes.

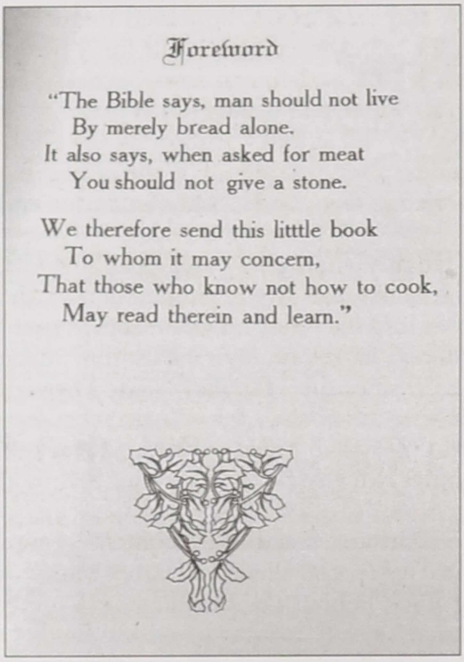
Mrs Stella Jones

Left: Cover of the *Cook Book*, published by the Elkins Home Demonstration Club in 1955. Right: A page from the Elkins *Cook Book*. The book is held in the Arkansas Cookbook Collection, University of Arkansas Libraries, Special Collections.

Recipe instructions included, "Bake 10 minutes in a good oven," or a "moderate," "quick," or "slow" oven; or "stir and heat to baby bottle temperature"—or they give no instructions at all; just a list of ingredients. This and other early books are notable for how recipe contributors refer to themselves. Women rarely use their own first names, but instead identify themselves by their husbands' names, such as "Mrs. John Doe."

Two books from the 1940s that are available—*Cooking Around the World and at Home*, 1946, by the Fayetteville Business & Professional Women's Club, and *What's Cookin'? in Fayetteville, Arkansas*, 1948, by the Womans [sic] Council, First Christian Church—introduce some new twists which continue to appear in local charitable cookbooks into the next decades. Some of these may be due to the influence of professional cookbook publishing services that that began to proliferate and relieved the local clubs of the challenges of assembling a cookbook. Clubs could simply send in their compiled recipes and the publishing companies would do the rest, adding division pages between sections and a cover design.[12]

Some of these new twists in the 1940s books suggest the cultural and technological changes that were taking place in America. For example, some women recipe contributors began to list their own names with their recipes—for example, "Jane Doe," rather than "Mrs. John Doe." Might this reflect American women's growing independence that was a conse-



Foreword

"The Bible says, man should not live
By merely bread alone.
It also says, when asked for meat
You should not give a stone.

We therefore send this litttle book
To whom it may concern,
That those who know not how to cook,
May read therein and learn."

The Foreword from *The Gift Book*, a cookbook published by the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, South, in Springdale. Dated 1924. From the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History cookbook collection.

quence of World War II and their home front responsibilities? Also, men's names began occasionally to appear as contributors.

By the '40s recipes give specific oven temperatures, indicating that new appliance technology was invading Washington County kitchens, leaving behind those "slow" or "moderate" ovens. Recipe ingredients more often list specific brand names—Wesson Oil, Knox Gelatin, Crisco, Karo syrup. This could be a sign of the 20th century growth of mass media and the marketing that supported it, which included food companies publishing recipes featuring their products. And, probably thanks to the cookbook publishing companies, books increasingly included a dozen or more pages of miscellaneous kitchen and household tips, provided as "stock" content by the companies; their influence also included more professional touches with the typography of recipes, and the design of section division pages and the covers.

From the 1940s to the '50s, charitable cookbooks started to take on the standardized look of mass-produced media. But despite this trend, Washington County groups continued to find ways to make their books more distinctive—which is apparent in two books published in the 1950s. Both the *Cook Book* by the Elkins Home Demonstration Club (1955) and the 1956 *Cook Book*, by the W.S.C.S. [Women's Society of Christian Service] of the Wesley Methodist Church in Springdale, took a decorative approach by placing elaborate borders around every page. In addition, the Elkins book is filled with photographs of recipe writers and members of their families whom the book's authors declare "to be some of the finest cooks in the land."

By the 1960s and '70s, the cookbooks not only looked very similar, but their contents were reflecting similar trends. Women had almost completely dropped using their husbands' names with their recipes, while the number of recipes contributed by men increased. Time- and labor-saving

ingredients, such as canned soups and cake mixes, appeared frequently in recipes. For example, a recipe for Strawberry Cake calls for a boxed white cake mix with strawberries, Jell-O, and frozen strawberries. The instructions for recipes were generally brief and lacked much detail; they could be as simple as "mix and bake as meat loaf." Almost all the cookbooks by this point had a recipe index, a service offered by the publishing companies, and they carried advertising from both local merchants and national food brands.

As this scan of Washington County charitable cookbooks suggests, a reading between the lines of the books can give an impression of the lives of home cooks, offering insights into the time and work women spent in the kitchen.[13] As traditional keepers of the family's meals, they made decisions about food and collected recipes their families liked. Through the causes they supported in publishing the books, we can learn what they cared about and therefore the nature of their values. But the history of the nature and values of communities can also be read here in their food traditions.

Over the long history of these charitable cookbooks, women's groups often used them to promote political and social agendas. Rather than this motivation, however, the driving force behind the Washington County cookbooks seems to have been strictly locally oriented—raising funds to help organizations with projects (e.g., funding a new facility) or that simply need extra cash, such as religious or community groups and schools. Over the years they have represented the efforts of Washington County women working together in their organizations to contribute something to the community that is based on their own skills and what they know best—the food they feed their families, that they offer at community gatherings, or that they take to neighbors and friends who are in need. In the process of producing these books, they have raised money for good causes, but they also have created a written record of recipes that have become family and community traditions and have built memories.

People who buy these modest little books, therefore, not only get tried and true local recipes and a hand in supporting local good cause, but they're also financing the building of a local cultural heritage. Not a bad deal for a few bucks.

Endnotes

[1]"Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Washington County," Arkansas Genealogy. Accessed January 25, 2023, at https://arkansasgenealogy.com/washington/methodist_episcopal_church_south.htm].

[2]John T. Edge, *A Gracious Plenty: Recipes and Recollections from the American South* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1999), p. 2.

[3]Ibid. Also, Margaret Cook, *America's Charitable Cooks: A Bibliography of Fund-raising Cook Books Published in the United States (1861-1915)* (Kent, Ohio: Margaret Cook, 1971).

[4]Janice Bluestein Longone, "'Tried Receipts': An Overview of America's Charitable Cook-

books," in *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories*, ed. Anne L. Bower. (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), p. 27. The estimate comes from the Tabasco Company which launched a local cookbook competition in the 1990s. It is based on the fundraising figures reported over the years by the hundreds of cookbooks in the company's various competitions which totaled more than $29 million.

[5] Email from Dee Ness to the author, December 15, 2021.

[6] Email from Regina Sherwood to the author, December 21, 2021.

[7] Jessica Stoller-Conrad, "The Salt: What's on Your Plate," National Public Radio, July 20, 2012. Accessed November 2021 at https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2012/07/18/156983942/long-before-social-networking-community-cookbooks-ruled-the-stove. See also Anne L. Bower, "Our Sisters' Recipes: Exploring 'Community' in a Community Cookbook," *Journal of Popular Culture* Vol 31, No. 3 (Winter 1997), p 137.

[8] Bower, "Our Sisters' Recipes," p. 137.

[9] Longone, "Tried Receipts," p. 20.

[10] Examples of research done on community cookbooks: Anne Bower, "Bound Together: Recipes, Lives, Stories, and Readings," in *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories*, ed. Anne L. Bower (Amherst, Machusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997); Rebecca Sharpless, "Cookbooks as Resources for Rural Research," *Agricultural History* Vol. 90, No. 2 (April 2016), p. 195, doi:10.3098/ah.2016.090.2.195; Jill Nussel, "Heating Up the Sources: Using Community Cookbooks in Historical Inquiry," *History Compass* Vol 4, No. 5 (2006), pp.956-961; Millie Rahn, 2006. "Laying a Place at the Table: Creating Public Foodways Models from Scratch," *Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 119 (471) (2006), pp. 30-46; Lisa Mastrangelo, "Comunity Cookbooks: Sponsors of Literacy and Community Identity," *Community Literacy Journal*, Vol. 10, Issue 1 (Autumn 2015); Harriet E. Wintermute, "The Joy of Cataloging Community Cookbooks," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, Vol. 55, Issue 4, https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2017.1291461; Kennan Ferguson, "Intensifying Taste, Intensifying Identity: Collectivity through Community Cookbooks," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2012), pp. 695–717; Michigan State University Libraries Digital Collections, "Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project," http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/index.html

[11] A copy of *A Poetical Cook-Book* by M.J.M [Maria J. Moss] (1864) is available for viewing on the Library of Congress website. See "Community Cookbooks: An Online Collection. 1860-1879 Cookbooks." Research Guides, Library of Congress. Accessed December 14, 2021, at https://archive.org/details/poeticalcookbook00moss/page/n8/mode/2up.
For information on the Library of Congress Community Cookbook collection, see Alison Kelly, "Community Cookbooks: An Online Collection. Introduction," Library of Congress Research Guides. Created 2009; last updated February 2020. Accessed December 14, 2021, at https://guides.loc.gov/community-cookbooks. At present, the digitization project covers 1860 to 1929; so far, no Arkansas cookbooks have been digitized for the collection.

[12] By the 1930s and '40s, a number of companies had been founded specifically to help local organizations in publishing their cookbooks. These companies provided templates for pages; all local organizations needed to do was type in the recipes. They also offered design options for covers and for section division pages; indexing of recipes, and "stock" pages of information about nutrition and tips on household maintenance. Charges for the publishing services were based on the number of recipes in the books and the number of the books that were printed. The companies used by the cookbooks in this article included Morris Press, Kearney, Nebraska; Bev-Ron Publishing, Overland Park, Kansas; Wimmer Cookbooks, Memphis, Tennessee; Fundcraft Publishing, Colliersville, Tennessee, and Walters Publishing, Waseca, Minnesota.

[13] Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). Palgrave is an imprint of St. Martin's Press.

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